

**SKILLED WORKFORCE INITIATIVE**  
**Program Year 2006 Funding Announcement**

**Subject:** Request for Application (RFA) Guidelines

**Funding Sources:** Workforce Investment Act (WIA) 15% Statewide Activities, Workforce Investment Act 25% Rapid Response, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) High Performance Bonus, Food Stamp Employment and Training, Parent's Fair Share (PFS)

**Eligible Applicant:** Missouri Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIB)

**Release Date:** February 1, 2006

**Submission Deadline:** March 31, 2006

**Contact:** Roderick Nunn, Director, Missouri Division of Workforce Development (DWD)

DWD is pleased to announce the Skilled Workforce Initiative competitive funding solicitation. This initiative will make \$8 million available to workforce regions across Missouri to better prepare current and future workers to meet critical skill demands of business and industry. As announced at Governor Blunt's 2005 Workforce Development Conference, this RFA is a new approach designed to stratify investment of limited discretionary employment and training funds in seven priority areas to better prepare Missourians for quality, family-supporting jobs.

This new RFA process will also serve to connect LWIB program offerings with discretionary funded projects to create more coordinated networks of employment and training service offerings in communities within each workforce Region. Every LWIB is empowered to convene strategic public and private partners to develop RFA applications in one or more of the seven funding areas—all designed to respond to critical skill shortages, both locally and in the state's priority sectors.

LWIBs that share regional economies are encouraged to partner with other boards to produce one regional strategic application(s). A key to success under this initiative will be the quality and strength of the local partnerships. These local partnerships can only be achieved through meaningful planning and engagement activities with business and industry; economic development and trade associations; labor; p-20 educational institutions; social and work support providers; mandatory WIA one-stop partners; and other government and civic leaders.

Each LWIB is encouraged to work with community partners to leverage other public and private funding sources to carry out initiatives under this application. Where applicable, local support will be critical in determining the sustainability of projects beyond the life of the grant funding under this initiative.

DWD's \$8 million Skilled Workforce Initiative offers seven RFAs in the following categories for Program Year 2006:

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| ❑ Incumbent Worker Skill Shortages                         | WIA 15% (\$1 million)                                |
| ❑ Youth Skill Shortages and Capacity Building              | WIA 15% (\$1 million)                                |
| ❑ Community Workforce Solutions for Low Income Populations | TANF High Performance Bonus, PFS, METP (\$3 million) |
| ❑ Business Retention Services                              | 25% Rapid Response (\$750,000)                       |
| ❑ Micro Enterprise Training and Support                    | WIA 15% (\$250,000)                                  |
| ❑ Regional Skills Gap – Phase III                          | WIA 15% (\$750,000)                                  |
| ❑ One-Stop Career Center Enhancements                      | WIA 15% (\$1.25 million)                             |

LWIBs and/or Regional Workforce Applicants should submit separate application proposal(s) for each funding category. Each RFA must follow the project application guidelines listed below. If a program design incorporates funding from more than one of the above categories, separate proposals for each category in the design is required; however, please reference the relation and priority each category component depicts in the overall program design. All categories in the program design will be given independent consideration for funding approval by each category review team.

DWD will host a Skilled Workforce Initiative applicant conference call on Friday, February 10, 2006, from 9:00 AM to Noon. The conference call is to provide an overview of each RFA category and to address LWIB questions and concerns. The call in number is (866) 809-5709 (toll free) or 522-8029 (local). Please review the seven RFA documents and email initial questions to Dawn Busick at [dawn.busick@ded.mo.gov](mailto:dawn.busick@ded.mo.gov) by COB Wednesday, February 8, 2006. Please note that subject matter experts will be available to provide RFA guidance over the next eight weeks.

The RFAs will be available on DWD's web site beginning Wednesday, February 1, 2006. The website also serve as an information portal for RFA activities including sections for Frequently Asked Questions, technical assistance resources, and grant awards. (<http://ded.mo.gov/wfd/>)

DWD recognizes that LWIBs have varying levels of capacity to convene community partnerships to apply for funding under this initiative within an eight-week period. DWD is making up to \$5,000 available for those LWIBs who need to procure professional grant writing and facilitation services. Qualified vendors include: Missouri Training Institute, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, Coffey Communication, Kaiser Group Inc., Greg Newton Associates, and Center for Workforce Learning (Mary Ann Lawrence).

**Eligible Applicant:** LWIBs within the state of Missouri

**Applicant must Identify:**

- ☐ RFA category submission
- ☐ Partners involved in the project
- ☐ Program operator/subcontractor
- ☐ Award recipient (legal name of the LWIB)
- ☐ Project contact person (name, phone, email, fax)

**Submission of Applications for Each RFA Category:**

- ☐ A complete copy of form DWD-PO-92.
- ☐ Applicants must submit an executive summary no longer than two pages. The executive summary will not count in the total page count.
- ☐ The project narrative is not to exceed ten pages double-spaced, single sided, on 8.5 inch x 11 inch pages with one inch margins.
- ☐ Text type will be no smaller than 11 point. The budget, budget narrative, staff qualifications, and attachments will not be counted in the ten page count of the narrative.
- ☐ Number all application pages including table of contents and attachments.
- ☐ List all attachments in the table of contents and number them.
- ☐ Letters of commitment from partners involved in the project must be included in the application, but are not counted against the narrative page limit.
- ☐ Complete the cover page provided
- ☐ Applicants must submit one original and five copies; and one electronic copy of each proposal for each RFA category.

Proposals must strictly adhere to the submission instructions or the proposal will not be considered. The RFA closing date is March 31, 2006, at 5:00 PM. Applications received after this date will not be considered for funding under this initiative.

Applicants must submit an original and five copies; and one electronic copy for each RFA category seeking funding to the following address:

Missouri Division of Workforce Development  
Attention: Roderick Nunn, Director  
421 East Dunklin Street  
PO Box 1087  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-1087

**Application Awards:**

The LWIB Chairperson and LWIB Director will be notified of receipt of award in writing. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify other interested parties in the local area of the status of the application(s). Applicants not awarded will also be notified in writing.

**Period of Performance:**

The period of performance will be July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2007. DWD may approve a request for a no-cost extension to grantees for an additional period of time based on the success of the project and other relevant factors.

## **Other Eligibility Requirements:**

### **Administrative Costs**

The administrative cost limit for each project will be negotiated at the time of award.

### **Distribution Rights**

Selected applicants must agree to give DWD the right to use and distribute all materials developed with grant funds such as training models, curriculum, technical assistance products; etc. Materials developed with grant resources are in the public domain; therefore, DWD has the right to use, reuse, modify, and distribute all grant-funded materials and products to any interested party, including broad distribution to the public workforce investment system via the internet or other means.

### **Project Application**

The project application will follow the format described below; however, each RFA category will require additional elements to be addressed based on specific application guidelines and federal regulations. Please write the application according to the requirements below and additional elements listed in the RFA.

#### **I. Executive Summary**

- a. Include a short description of the project, local collaboration, outcomes, and leveraging of local resources including local activity funds (10% of any of the Title 1B formula funding streams).

#### **II. Project Narrative**

##### **a. Purpose**

##### **b. Strategic Partners**

- i. Identify partners
- ii. Explain each partner's role in project
- iii. Verify each partner's role through their letter of commitment

##### **c. Statement of Need**

- i. LMI data supporting local economic needs
- ii. Target population
- iii. Skills gap

##### **d. Project Design**

- i. Duration
- ii. Timeline and milestones
- iii. Project goals
- iv. How this project fits into local plan
- v. Use of approved and pending U.S. Department of Labor waivers
- vi. Training for short term and long term career growth
- vii. Non-duplication of existing services
- viii. Marketing/Outreach:

1. Proposals should outline how applicant will notify potential customers throughout the region of the availability of these services.
2. Proposals should indicate, where appropriate, coordination with state and/or other regional marketing efforts.

**e. Performance**

- i. Past performance of the program operator
- ii. Performance measures to fit the funding source (The LWIB may include performance measures other than those required in the application.)
- iii. Suggestions for planned performance based on funding source.
  1. Enrollment and completion
  2. Employment placement
  3. Credential or college credit
  4. Employment retention
  5. Successful engagement (enrollment and activities – Career Assistance Program, PFS)

**f. Staff qualifications**

- i. Job descriptions of key personnel involved in the proposed project
  1. Project director
  2. Fiscal officer
  3. Case manager
  4. Trainer(s)
- ii. Resumes for key personnel

**III. Use of Funds Policy**

- a. Identify project activities, cost-sharing, and matching and corresponding funding source(s). While a local match is not generally required, applicants are encouraged to leverage the resources of all partners whenever possible.
- b. Funds awarded through this RFA will only be used to cover costs appropriate for the program design identified in each project.

**IV. Budget**

**a. Narrative**

- i. Applicant must submit detailed justification (in spreadsheet format) for all budget line items. Detail must include sufficient information to verify all calculations. Staffing information must include:
  1. Title
  2. Total salary
  3. Percent of salary charged to this project
  4. Dollar amount charged to this project

- ii. The state would like to expand the available resources by leveraging other funding and in-kind contributions. LWIBs are strongly encouraged to include local activity funds as a component of leveraged resources. To this end, applicants with other funds will be scored higher than those who only utilize funds under this proposal. Applicants will need to identify all funds used: federal, state, and local government, as well as foundation and other private sources generated by the initiative. Applicants will need to describe the utilization of these funds in their proposal.
- c. **Line item**  
Applicants must use the budget form provided in this RFA; no others will be accepted.
- d. **Sustainability**  
If applicable, explain how the program will be sustained after the contract ends.

## **V. Project Reporting**

- a. Local oversight of the project.
- b. DWD will require quarterly performance and activity timeline reports both fiscally and programmatically.
- c. All participant records will be maintained in Toolbox under special project codes.
- d. End of year report.

## **VI. Evaluation and Scoring**

Applications must define the region covered by the proposals, describing the components' specific challenges, demonstrate the LWIB's commitment to the project and propose an integrated approach to workforce development.

An inter-agency team of subject-matter experts will evaluate each application. Scoring criteria and weight assigned will be based on critical program elements identified within each RFA.

The evaluations will serve as the primary basis for selection of applications for funding, in conjunction with other factors such as urban, rural, and geographic balance; availability of funds; uniqueness and innovative aspects of the project; and which proposals are most advantageous to the state and how they relate to the Governor's vision.

## **VII. Reservation Clauses**

- a. DWD will make awards based on the merit of the proposal and the recommendation of the review team.

- b. DWD reserves the right not to award any contracts based on the quality of submitted proposals.
- c. DWD reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications that do not completely conform to the RFA guidelines prescribed.
- d. DWD reserves the right to request clarification on submitted proposals.
- c. All proposals become the property of DWD.

### **VIII. Procurement**

Upon final selection and negotiation, DWD will issue contracts to LWIBs in the name of the grant recipient identified in the region's WIA local plan, as these funds are intended to build upon and improve the existing local system. The statewide public notification that DWD will do is the only public notice required. LWIBs must engage and consider the proposals of service providers that fit within the region's overall strategies, and address the categories outlined in this RFA; however, LWIBs have full discretion to ultimately include or exclude any proposal. When the state makes an award to the LWIB, these funds will be awarded based upon utilizing the systems and contractors outlined in the RFA response and no additional procurement process will be required, unless local ordinances require them.

This office is excited about this new approach for funding special projects and hopes to see some very innovative proposals that are congruent with local plans, address critical skill shortages, and show true growth and commitment to the Skilled Workforce Initiative.